

apply the term desmognathous to those birds, it must be on the understanding that it is a different kind of thing from the desmognathism of—say—the Anseres.

March 2, 1897.

Dr. W. T. BLANFORD, F.R.S., V.P., in the Chair.

The Secretary exhibited two examples of a new Viper, recently discovered by Capt. A. H. McMahon during the Survey of the Indo-Persian frontier, and named *Eristicophis macmahoni*, gen. et sp. nov., by Dr. Alcock. The following notes on its habits, sent to the Society by the discoverer along with the specimens, were read:—

“We found this snake in the sandy portions only of the desert lying between Nushki and Persia. While lying still on the sand it is almost impossible, even in the brightest light, to distinguish it from the sand on which it lies. During the daytime it appeared to be fond of burying its body in the soft sand, leaving its head only exposed on the surface. We never noticed it to make any sound in the daytime, but at night whenever we approached one of them, even at a distance of many yards off, it used to make a loud deep hissing sound—an angry deep sound, unlike the crisp hiss of *Echis carinata*, the hiss of the cobra, or any other snake I have ever heard. It evidently hisses from deep down in the throat, for I have failed ever to detect any muscular movement such as the *Echis* makes when it rustles its scales together to produce a hissing sound.

“It apparently never attempts to escape, and lies still, hissing away, if at night, until killed, or until the intruder passes by, or is out of sight or hearing, as the case may be. In the daytime these snakes are consequently hard to find, and even at night, loud as they hiss, it is difficult to detect them on the sand. The larger of the two specimens I gave you (the largest, in fact, of all those we found) very nearly bit my horse one night, when, trusting to the bright moonlight to enable me to distinguish its outline, I had ridden too close to where the hissing sound proceeded from. These snakes are very difficult to secure without injuring them as specimens. Even light blows with a thin stick will cut the skin and disfigure the specimen. The smaller but more perfect of the two specimens I sent you was captured alive, and thus escaped injury.

“Their fragile skins and soft bodies are, I presume, due to their living always in very soft sand.”

A series of specimens of various Insects reared in the Insect-house in the Society's Gardens in 1896 was exhibited, and the following report on the subject drawn up by Mr. Arthur Thomson, the Society's Head Keeper, was read:—

Report on the Insect-house for 1896.

Examples of the following species of Insects have been exhibited in the Insect-house during the past season:—

Silk-producing Bombyces and their Allies.

Asiatic.

<i>Attacus atlas.</i>	<i>Antheræa mylitta.</i>
— <i>cynthia.</i>	<i>Actias selene.</i>
— <i>ricini.</i>	<i>Cricula trifenestrata.</i>
— <i>pernyi.</i>	

American.

<i>Attacus lebeaui.</i>	<i>Telea polyphemus.</i>
<i>Samia cecropia.</i>	— <i>promethea.</i>
— <i>ceanothi.</i>	<i>Hyperchiria io.</i>
<i>Actias luna.</i>	

African.

<i>Attacus mythimna.</i>	*(<i>Saturnia</i>) <i>terpsichore.</i>
<i>Actias mimosa.</i>	<i>Eudæmonia brachyura.</i>
<i>Antheræa menippe.</i>	

Diurnal Lepidoptera.

European.

<i>Papilio podalirius.</i>	<i>Limenitis sibylla.</i>
— <i>machaon.</i>	<i>Vanessa polychloros.</i>
<i>Thais cerisyi.</i>	— <i>antiopa.</i>
<i>Doritis apollinus.</i>	

American.

* <i>Papilio zolicaon.</i>	<i>Papilio ajax.</i>
— <i>cresphontes.</i>	— <i>ilioneus.</i>
— <i>asterias.</i>	— <i>philenor.</i>
— <i>troilus.</i>	<i>Limenitis disippus.</i>

African.

Papilio corinneus.

Nocturnal Lepidoptera.

<i>Acherontia atropos.</i>	<i>Lagoa crispata.</i>
<i>Sphinx ligustri.</i>	<i>Eacles imperialis.</i>
— <i>pinastri.</i>	— <i>regalis.</i>
* <i>Deilephila syriaca.</i>	<i>Anisota stigma.</i>
— <i>alecto.</i>	<i>Thyatira batis.</i>
— <i>euphobia.</i>	<i>Chelonia villica.</i>
<i>Philampelus achemon.</i>	<i>Liparis dispar.</i>
<i>Darapsa myron.</i>	<i>Pericallia syringaria.</i>
<i>Smerinthus excecatus.</i>	* <i>Cerura</i> sp. inc.
<i>Ceratonia undulosa.</i>	<i>Saturnia pyri.</i>
* <i>Eudryas unio.</i>	— <i>carpini.</i>

* Exhibited for the first time.

Of the Lepidopterous insects which I have the honour to place before the meeting, *Deilephila syriaca* and *Cerura* sp. inc. from Syria, *Papilio zolicaon* and *Eudryas unio* from South America, and (*Saturnia*) *terpsichore* from Mozambique are now exhibited for the first time.

The specimen of *Cerura* from Syria is closely allied to *Cerura interrupta*, but belongs, I think, to a new species. *Papilio zolicaon* is the representative in America of the well-known *Papilio machaon* of Europe. Although we have had examples of many species of N. American Papilios, this is the first occasion on which I have been able to exhibit specimens of this species.

The six specimens of *Saturnia terpsichore* belong to the Hon. Walter Rothschild, F.Z.S. This species is very rare, and up to the present time, I believe, is not represented in the Natural History Museum.

Of Orthoptera, Mr. W. L. Sclater, F.Z.S., has sent us an example of a species of *Blepharis*, in the larval stage, from South Africa. I am sorry to say that this curious Mantis, which seems to differ from all specimens in the Museum, died before passing into the perfect form.

Mr. J. E. Matcham, C.M.Z.S., brought us home 7 African Locusts (*Phymateus leprosus*). These insects fed voraciously upon almost any kind of green food, particularly lettuce.

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